

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. Claims 7-10 are withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to correct antecedence and claim 11 has been added.

No new matter has been added by this Amendment. Support for the language added to claim 11 can be found at, for example, paragraph 43 of the original specification.

I. Objection to the Specification

The disclosure was objected to because of alleged informalities. In order to expedite prosecution of this application, the specification has been appropriately amended. Thus, this objection is now moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. In particular, the Patent Office alleged that there was no antecedent basis for "the upper and lower cover" recited in claim 1. Thus, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite "the upper case and the lower case."

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,645,448 ("Hill") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,276,960 ("Schaefer"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

According to the Patent Office, Hill teaches all of the features recited in claim 1 except the use of an intermediate case between the upper and lower case. Thus, the Patent Office relied on Schaefer as allegedly teaching a fuse box having an upper case portion, a

lower case portion and an intermediate case portion. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Patent Office's allegations.

In particular, Applicants submit that Hill does not teach or suggest an output-side bus bar as alleged by the Patent Office. The Patent Office alleges that Hill teaches an input-side bus bar and an output-side bus bar (74, 75). However, feature 74 of Hill correlates to w2 (electric wire) in the present application and feature 75 correlates to 25 (terminal) in the present application. Item 75 in Hill is not an output-side bus bar.

In the present application, an output-side bus bar (16) is between an output terminal (10c) and a terminal (25), e.g., as shown in Fig. 1 of the present application. In Hill, the alternator cable terminal (75) directly connects with the output terminal of the high current main fuse (80).

In addition, there was no motivation to combine Hill and Schaefer in the manner alleged by the Patent Office. In particular, there is no need for an intermediate case in Hill as the cables are located outside the case and are connected inside the case via terminals. See the Abstract of Hill. The structure according to Hill appears to eliminate the need for any separate intermediate case within the case structure as recited in claim 1.

Further, the case according to Schaefer is complex, including male and female connectors, and is not appropriate for use with the structure taught by Hill. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have taken the intermediate case from Schaefer and combined it with the teachings of Hill.

Furthermore, even if the intermediate case of Schaefer was inserted into Hill, the resulting fuse box would not be the compact fuse box recited in claim 1. In particular, the bulky intermediate case disclosed by Schaefer would not produce a fuse box with a reduced overall height as recited in claim 1.

Thus, Applicants submit that claims 1-6 are patentable over Hill in view of Schaefer.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

IV. Claim 11

Neither Hill nor Schaefer, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest a battery fuse wherein the battery fuse, the input side bus bar and the output side bus bar are fixedly accommodated on the intermediate case as recited in new claim 11. Thus, Applicants submit that new claim 11 is patentable over both Hill and/or Schaefer.

V. Restriction Requirement

Applicants submit that claims 7-10 should be rejoined as a search of claims 1-6 would necessarily entail a search of all limitations recited in claims 7-10.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claim 1-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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